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ABSTRACT

The Philippine educational system views education as a human development resource conversion process that can maximize the realization of the national developmental goals. Students comprise the principal input of this manpower resource conversion process. The output is individuals who can find useful and productive employment. Two broad strategies in the processing of manpower output are recognized: formal education and nonformal education. An overall assessment of the Philippine educational system shows that its outstanding feature is its high enrollment at all school levels and its overall quantitative achievements. Its key weaknesses are unsatisfactory instructional quality, high dropout and repeater rates, inequality in educational opportunity, and inadequate attention to technical skill training. The agricultural educational system, and within it the forestry educational subsystem, has experienced rapid growth in enrollments and number of agricultural institutions. This has led to low quality instruction caused by financial contraints, an inadequate number of well-trained teachers, and poorly trained graduates who have difficulty in qualifying for employment. Agricultural education needs rationalization through standards and the establishment of a National Agricultural Education System, upgrading of teaching staff capabilities, and effective means to educate the public through the media and institutionalized nonformal educational programs. (YLB)

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The Philippine System of Education: Some Implications to Agricultural Education*

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by

Samuel T. Mancebo, Ph. D.**

I. Introduction

The Philippines has a long history of formal education that can be traced back to the Spanish regime. Its system has metamorphosed, gradually integrating the colonial orientation of education, its cultural values and aspirations and its desire for development, into what it is now today. Together with the other countries all over the world -- both the developed as well as the developing ones, the present national leadership has regarded education as a fundamental issue of national significance[1/] and as a powerful means for human resource development[2/].

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1/ Waldo S. Perfecto, Future Directions in Philippine Education (mimeographed), 1978. p.1.

2/ Juan A. Manuel, Education Challenges for National Progress. (mimeographed), 1978. p.1.

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In the context of Philippine development, therefore, the educational system is viewed as a tool that can maximize the realization of the national development goals[3/] such as economic development and social progress, maximum participation in the attainment and enjoyment of socio-economic growth, strengthening of National Unity, consciousness, and preservation, development and promotion of cultural, moral and spiritual values in a changing world. With the alignment of the system to the national development goals, it becomes the basic policy of the state[4/] to establish and maintain a complete adequate and integrated system of education.

II. The Objectives of the System

As embodied in the Parliamentary Bill 524[5/], the educational system aims to:

1. Provide for a broad general education that will assist each individual in the peculiar ecology of his own society;

[3/] Presidential Decree 6-A and Parliamentary Bill 524 (Proposed Education Act of 1980 Article I, Chapter 2, Section 3)

[4/] Article XV, Section 8, Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines.

[5/] This bill incorporate the approval committee and individual amendments during the second regular session of the Batasang Pambansa.

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(a) attain his potentials as a human being; (b) enhance the range and quality of individual and group participation in the basic functions of society; and (c) acquire the essential educational foundation of his development into a productive and versatile citizen;

2. Train the nation's manpower in the middle-level skills required for national development;

3. Develop the professions that will provide leadership for the nation in the advancement of knowledge for improving the quality of human life; and

4. Respond effectively to changing needs and conditions of the nation through a system of educational planning and evaluation.

Towards the realization of these objectives, and pursuant to the constitution, all educational institutions shall aim to inculcate love of country, teach the duties of citizenship, and develop moral character, personal discipline, and scientific, technological, and vocational effeciency.

Futhermore, the system shall reach out to educationally deprived communities, in order to give meaningful reality to their membership in the National Society, to enrich their civic participation in the community and national life, and to unify all filipinos into a free and just nation.

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III. The Structure of the Educational System

As envisioned in the objectives above, the system views education as a human development resource conversion process.[6/] The process has the following input-output flow:

A. The Educational Input and Output

The principal raw material input of this process consist of students whose supply sources is the population. The basic input undergoes a series of conversions which starts with basic education. In this process, a certain percentage of the input drops out of the system while another percentage will finish the entire process which ends up in higher education.

Regardless of the number of steps undergone by the input in the educational process, the end product or output is an individual who can fulfill his physical, intellectual, emotional and social needs, participate in the basic functions of society, and ultimately contribute to the development of the economic and social system of the country.[7/]

[6/] A concept of education as agreed in the Education Workshop held on August 4-5, 1974.

[7/] Liceria B. Soriano, "Overview of the Philippine Educational System" (Unpublished paper presented at the Education Workshop held on August 4-5, 1974).

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As manpower resource conversion process, therefore, education produces a product that is absorbable or can find useful and productive employment with end-users in the economic and social system or with the various sectors employing manpower, namely, agriculture, forestry, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, transportation, storage and communication, electricity, gas water and sanitary services, commerce, government, community, business and recreational services, domestic services, personal service and other productivities not elsewhere classified. These sectors may also be occupations involving intellectual and artistic skills like music, arts and creative dieting including household chores of housewives (Figure 1).

B. The Educational Process

The Philippine education system recognizes two broad strategies in the processing of manpower output. They are the formal education and the non-formal education.

Like in other countries, several stages are involve in the Philippine formal education (Figure 2). In the first stage, a child of seven enters the elementary level, goes through four years of primary and two to three years of intermediate schooling. The second stage brings him to the secondary level of education where he takes either the general secondary school or the vocational/specialized school in the

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next four years. At the final stage, the student, now at the age of sixteen or seventeen and after passing the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) and Institutional Tests, enters the collegiate level or degree course level of 4-5 years duration where he concentrates on a field of study he is interested in to prepare him to join the ranks of the employed. Those who do not wish to pursue a 4-year degree program or does not pass the college entrance test, a post-secondary education of non-degree type is given in a variety of 1, 2 or 3 years courses usually with agricultural, technical or commercial curricula. After this stage, an option to pursue higher or post-graduate studies is open to him after finishing a degree if he decides not to be absorbed by the economic market.

In the non-formal education set-up, the processing is aimed at a specific learning objectives for a particular clientele especially the illiterates and the out-of-school youth and adults to enable them to become more productive and effective citizens.

C. Administration of the Education System

Presently, education and its administration involve two separate agencies. Policy is determined by the National Board of Education.. Administrative responsibility for public

schools and non-charted colleges, as well as the supervision of private schools, rests with the Ministry of Education and Culture. The State Colleges and Universities are however, administered by their respective boards of trustees with the Minister of Education as Chairman.

The organization of the Ministry is composed of the (a) Ministry proper (b) The Three Staff bureaus (elementary, secondary and higher education) (c) Regional Office and field offices and other offices attached to the Ministry Figure 3).

However, the Parliamentary Bill 524 which proposes the Education Act of 1980, will reorganize the Ministry of Education and Culture. The National Board of Education will be abolished instead a Board of Higher Education will be established. Two additional bureaus are proposed. The Bureau of Technical-Vocational Education and the Bureau of Continuing Education.

IV. Performance of the System

The System has provided formal education in the 1978-79 firuge to the population as shown in the table below:[8/]

Stage	Enrolments			Percentage	
	Total	Public	Private	Public	Private
Primary	7,860,000	7,420,000	440,000	94.4	5.6
Secondary	3,102,500	1,722,500	1,380,000	55.5	44.5
Post-Secondary	182,196	19,880	162,316	10.9	89.1
Degree (Bachelor)	906,585	n.a.	n.a.		
Degree(Master & Doctor)	40,275	n.a.	n.a.		

8/ The British Council Final Report (Part I) on Vocational-Technical-Agricultural Education Project, Philippines, December, 1980, p.3.

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From the table, it is shown that the public sector shoulder the biggest burden of providing basic education while the private sector increasing share the task of educating the secondary and collegiate levels. With the increase in population, an increase in enrolment in all levels will also be experienced in the next two years. In the elementary level, the participation rate is projected to be 90.31 percent in 1980-81 while at the secondary level, it will be 71.32 percent for the same year.[9/]

Looking at the overall assessment of the Philippine education system, the following can be summarized:[10/]

1. The outstanding feature of the Philippine education system is its high enrolment ratios at all levels, and its overall quantitative achievement, namely:
   a. Universal enrolment at the primary level, an enrolment ratio of 60% at the secondary level and one of the highest testiary level enrolment ratios (21%) in the world.

9/ Planning and Program Division, 1981. The MEC Programs. Its Status and Directions (1980-82). Planning Service. Ministry of Education and Culture. pp. 3, 12.

10/ op. cit. British Council Report. p.6.

b. High percentage of qualified teachers in all three stages of education and reasonable pupil-teacher ratios (29:1 in primary and 30:1 in secondary schools);

c. An adult literacy rate of 87% which, after Korea, is the highest in the Asia and Oceanic Region.

2. Despite these remarkable achievements, the educational system has the following key weaknesses:

a. Unsatisfactory quality, as documented in the 1976 Survey of outcomes of elementary education;

b. Low internal effeciency. At elementary level drop-outs still run at more than 10% annually and the enrolment ratio is significantly inflated by repeaters, in spite of the gradual spread of automatic promotion at secondary level dropouts rise to 12% annually, which means that only about half of the beginning students actually complete the four years. Wastage rate is slightly higher at tertiary level, (and in addition the existence of more 650 institutions - with a median enrolment of less than 1,000 - suggests an ineffecient scale of operation at many institutions). In the vocational-technical subsector wastage is extremely high in the formal system (50-80%), but falls to about a third

in the National Manpower and Youth Council(NMYC) courses. Overall, about two-fifths of total educational expenditure goes for students who will repeat, dropout before completion, or both. Most of this waste is attributable to dropouts, and surveys show that most of these dropouts occur for financial reasons;

c. Inequality in educational opportunity, (in the form of of wide variations in primary school achievements and dropout rates between the regions, and in access to upper primary and further schooling in rural areas);

d. Inadequate attention to technical skill training, with confusion in policy in its organization and lack of sound technical teacher training, combined with an over-emphasis on the production of academically taught graduates and too little attention to practical subject training.

With this situation, the government has taken certain actions to try and improve such situation. The current educational development policy stems from the Educational Decree of 1972. Massive efforts on educational reforms and policies are being undertaken to upgrade the educational delivery system and improve the quality of education in the country not only to meet its national objectives but also serve the international efforts.

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V. Some Implications to Agricultural Education

At the micro-level, the agricultural education system or forestry education subsystem constitutes a small portion of the total education system in the Philippines. It is faced with serious problems as in the macro system. While the efforts of the government is to improve both the macro and micro educational systems, the improvement of the micro system will help accelerate the development of the bigger system.

The agricultural education system which includes forestry education is beset with problems, such as:[10/]

a. Enrolments have increased and a proliferation of agricultural institutions have been observed. There are now more 280 of these institutions.

b. Such rapid growth, accompanied by financial constraints and an inadequate number of well-trained teachers, has led to instruction which is generally of low quality.

c. As a result, graduates at levels tend to be poorly trained and have difficulty in qualifying for employment in their respective fields.

10/ World Bank Appraisal Report of the Fourth Education Proh Project in the Republic of the Philippines, February 10, 1977. p.1.

The problems identified, would therefore mean:

1. rationalization of agricultural education through standards and the establishment of a National Agricultural Education System.[11/] This includes the plan to create a forestry education subsystem (Figure 4) which proposes to establish a National University for forestry, three Regional Colleges of Forestry and at least 12 Forestry Institutes. This would mean better allocation of resources.
2. upgrading of the capabilities of the teaching staff in agriculture, forestry, fishery and other related fields through advance training and inservice education programs and relevant curriculum.
3. the system must be able to evolve an effective means of educating the public through media and institutionalized non-formal education programs.

[11/] The Macro Plan for Agricultural Education in the Philippines, Technical Panel for Agricultural Education, MEC, September, 1981.

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2. Juan A. Manuel, Education Challenges for National Progress (Mimeographed), 1978.

3. Presidential Decree 6-A (The Educational Development Decree of 1972).

4. Parliamentary Bill 524 (The Education Act of 1980).

5. Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines

6. Liceria B. Soriano, "Overview of the Philippine Educational System." (Unpublish paper presented at the Education Workshop, August 4-5, 1974).

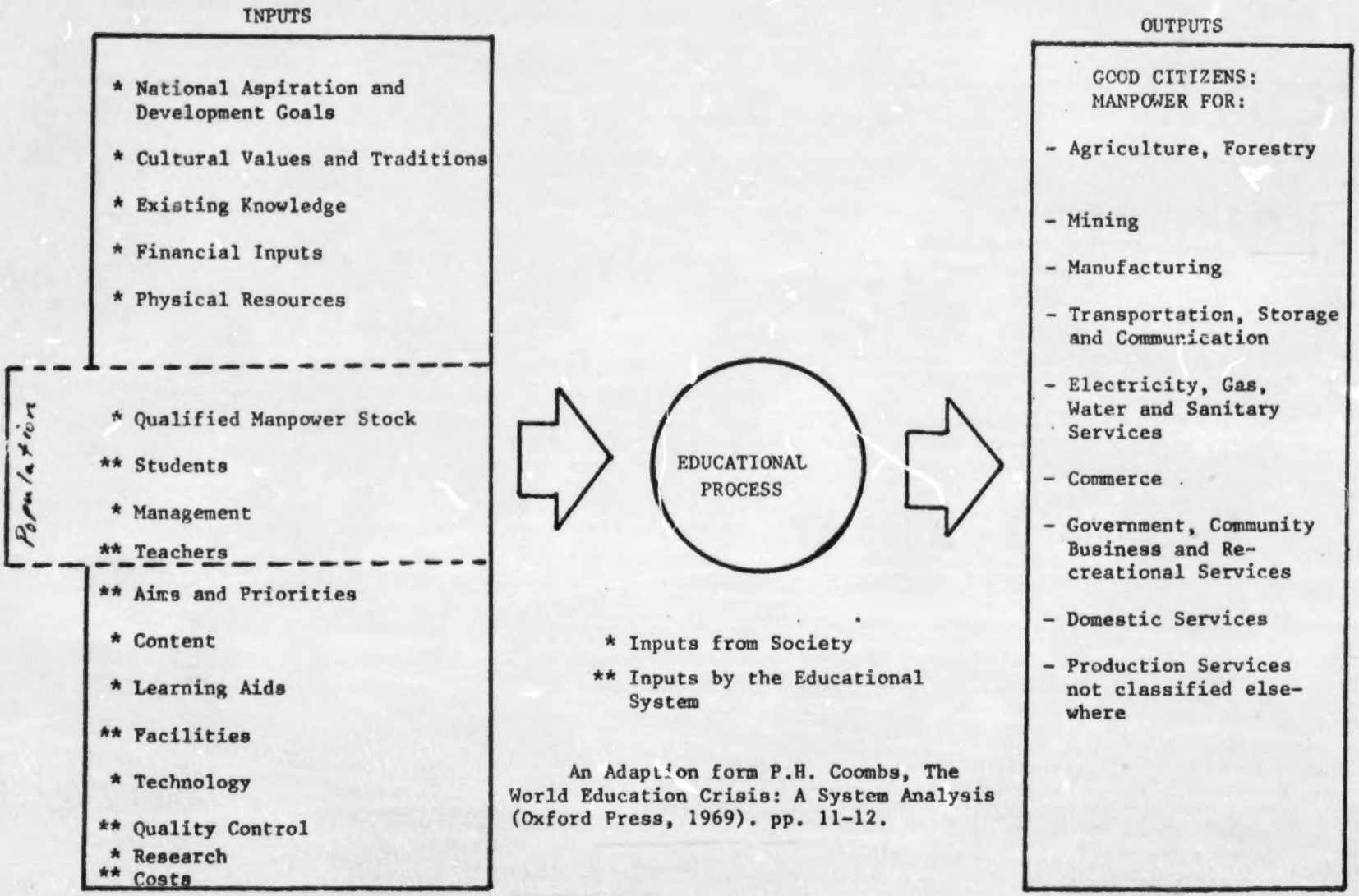
7. The British Council Final Report Part I. On Vocational-Technical-Agricultural Education Project, Philippines, December, 1980.

8. The MEC Programs: Its Status and Directions (1980-82) Planning Services. Ministry of Education and Culture, 1981.

9. World Bank Appraisal Report of the Fourth Education Project in the Republic of the Philippines, February, 1977.

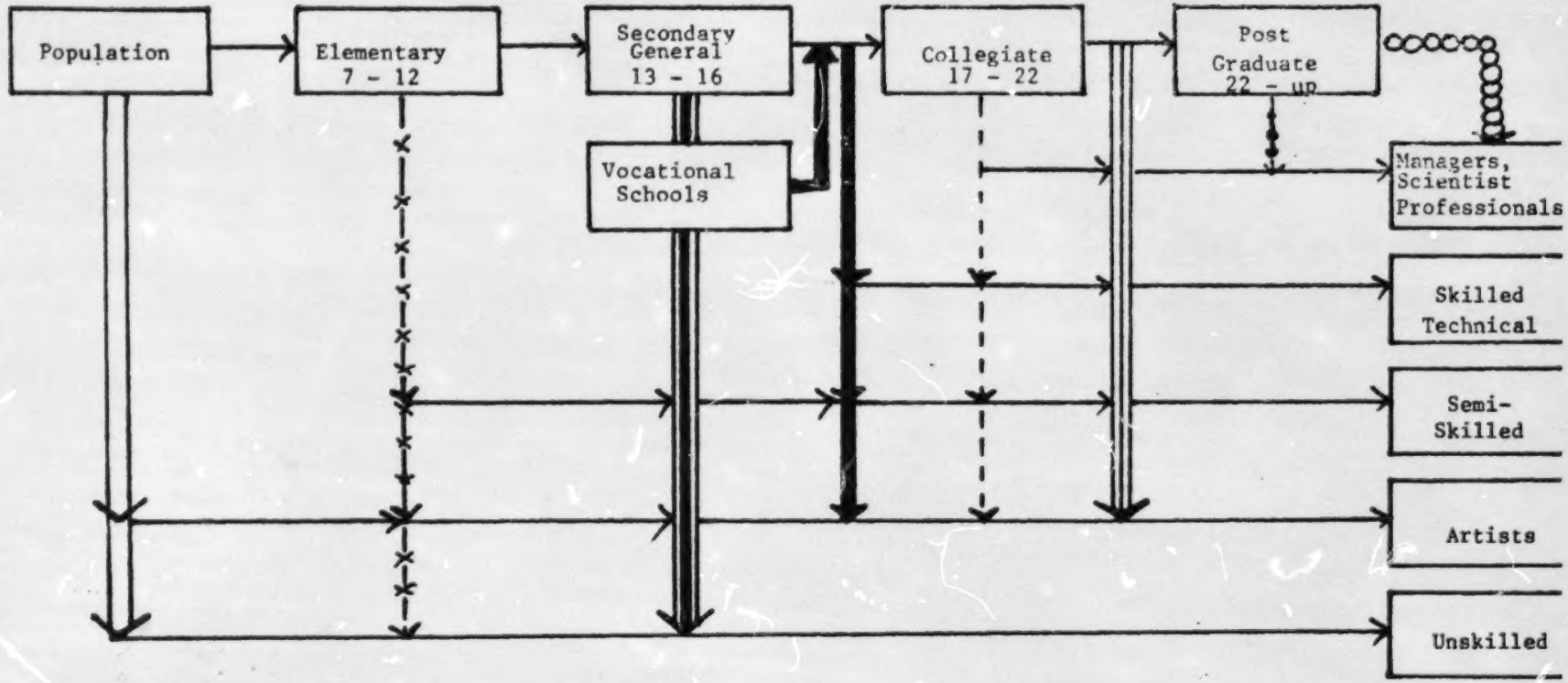
10. The Macro Plan for Agricultural Education in the Philippines. Technical Panel for Agricultural Education, MEC, September, 1981.

Figure 1. The Human Resource Development Conversion Process



An Adaption form P.H. Coombs, The World Education Crisis: A System Analysis (Oxford Press, 1969). pp. 11-12.

Figure 2. The Educational Process



Population without any Education

Dropouts from the Elementary

Dropouts from the Secondary

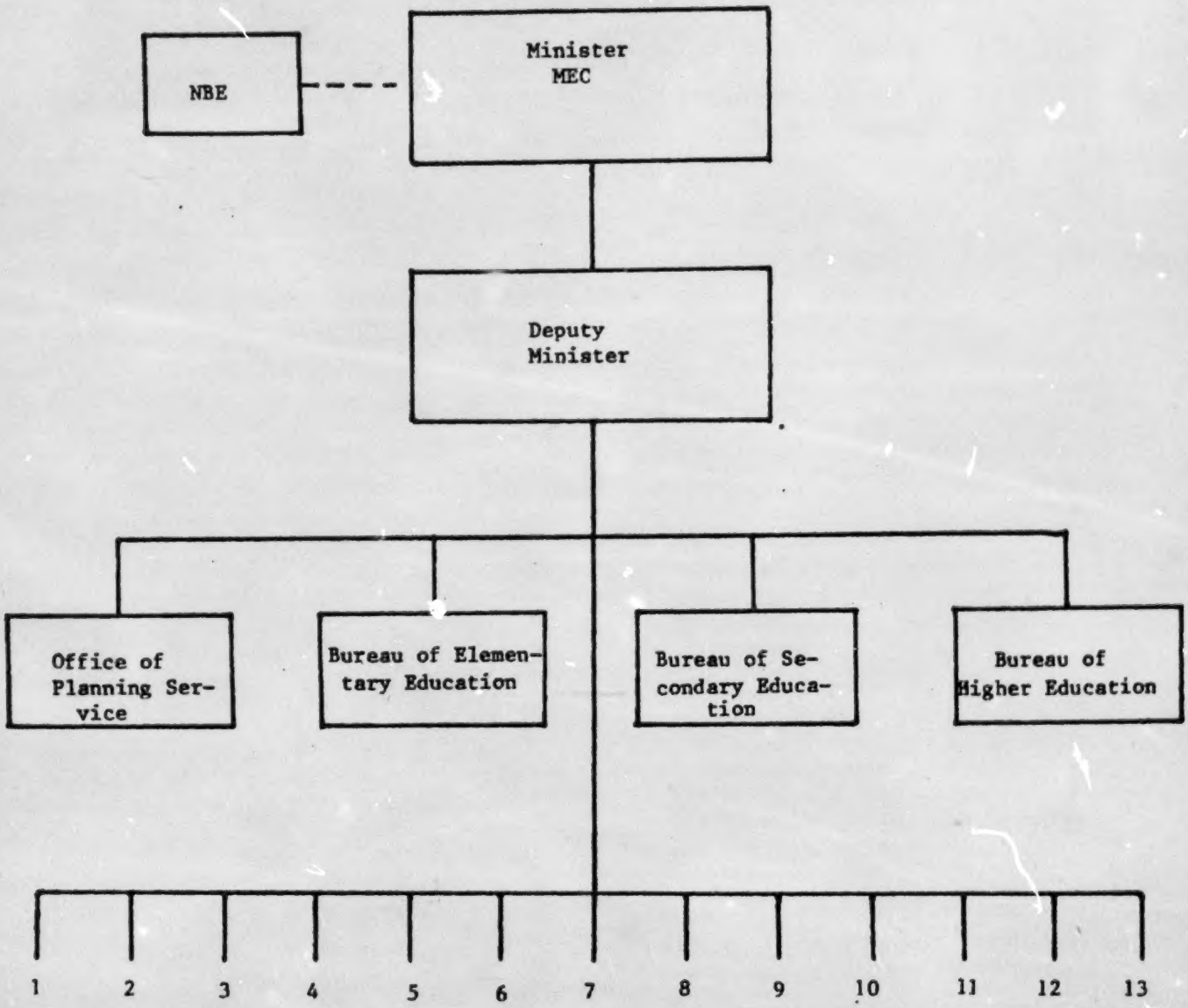
Graduates from the Secondary

Dropouts from the Collegiate Level

Graduates from the Collegiate Level

Dropouts from the Post-Graduate Level

Graduates from the Post-Graduate Level



13 Regional Directors have supervision and control of all levels of education in the respective regions.

Figure 3. Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture

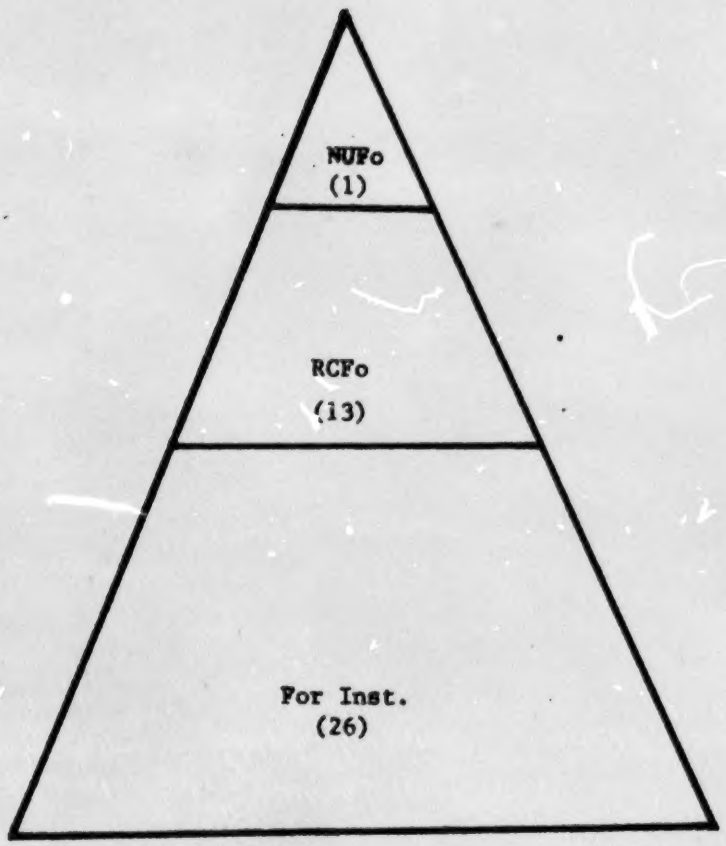


Figure 4. Conceptual Set-up of the proposed Forestry Education Subsystem